

NORTH WITCHFORD RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

Annual Report of the Medical Officer of Health for the Year, 1954

MR. CHAIRMAN, LADIES and GENTLEMEN,

I beg to present to you my report for the year 1954 on the health condition of your district during that period.

I also present the Sanitary Inspector's report.

I have the honour to be, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

CECIL THOMAS,

Medical Officer of Health.

GENERAL PROVISIONS FOR HEALTH SERVICES

(1) Public Health Committee.

This comprises the whole Council.

(2) Public Health Officers.

Medical Officer of Health—CECIL THOMAS, M.R.C.S., L.R.C.P.

Sanitary Inspector—JOHN METCALFE, M.R.San.I.

(3) Nursing in the Home.

The entire district has the services of Trained Nurses under the control of the Local Authority.

(4) Hospital.

Most patients are now treated at Doddington Hospital.

(5) Ambulance Facilities.

These are controlled by the County Council.

(6) Child Welfare.

Clinics are held at Doddington and Manea.

Social Conditions.

The bulk of the adult population is engaged in agricultural work and there are a considerable number of small-holdings under the control of the Isle of Ely County Council. Agricultural work also provides seasonal employment for many of the female adult population.

General Statistics.

Area (acres)	26,088
Population (estimated mid year by Registrar General)	4,830
Number of inhabited houses	1,611
Rateable Value	£14,836
Estimated net product of a penny rate	£57

The estimated population shows a decrease of 15 on the previous year. The census return in 1951 was 5,023.

Vital Statistics.

Table 1. Live Births:

	M.	F.	Total
Legitimate	41	31	72
Illegitimate	1	—	1
	42	31	73

The birth rate at 15.11 per 1,000 population shows an increase on that of 11.55 for the previous year (56 births) and compares favourably with the birth rate for England and Wales at 15.2 per 1,000 population. The figure for the latter in 1953 was 15.5.

Table 2. Still Births:

There were no still births in the District during 1954.

Table 3. Infantile Mortality:

There was one death for infants under 1 year of age, this being a child (male) under 4 weeks of age. The Infantile Mortality rate for the year was 13.7 per 1,000 live births, compared with 25.5 per 1,000 live births for the whole country.

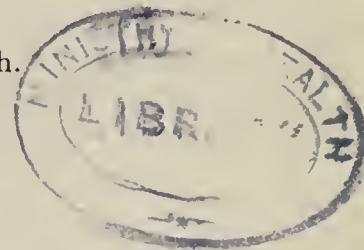


Table 4. Deaths in Area and Causes:

	M.	F.	Total
Malignant neoplasm stomach	1	2	3
Malignant neoplasm lung bronchus	1	—	1
Malignant neoplasm breast	—	1	1
Other malignant and lymphatic neoplasms	2	3	5
Vascular lesions of nervous system	2	—	2
Coronary disease angina	3	—	3
Other heart disease	4	5	9
Other circulatory disease	—	1	1
Pneumonia	2	—	2
Bronchitis	1	1	2
Ulcer of stomach and duodenum	1	—	1
Hyperplasia of prostate	1	—	1
Other defined and ill defined diseases	7	2	9
Motor vehicle accidents	1	—	1
	—	—	—
	26	15	41
	—	—	—

The death rate for 1954 was 8.48 per 1,000 population compared with 11.3 for England and Wales. For the previous year the District death rate (with 49 deaths) was 10.11 per 1,000 population as against 11.4 for the whole country.

Notifiable Infectious Diseases.

Diseases.	Total Notified.
Pulmonary Tuberculosis	1
Scarlet Fever	13
Pertussis	39
Erysipelas	3
Pneumonia	12
Para Typhoid	1
Salmonella Enteritidis	2
Food Poisoning	1
	—
	72
	—

The Para Typhoid case was notified from Doddington Hospital, the patient having been admitted from March Urban District. The two cases of Salmonella Enteritidis and the Food Poisoning case were also notified from Doddington Hospital, the patients all having been admitted from Chatteris Urban District.

Food Poisoning Outbreaks.

There were no notified outbreaks of food poisoning occurring in the Rural District during 1954.

NORTH WITCHFORD
RURAL DISTRICT COUNCIL

Sanitary Inspector's Report for the Year, 1954

Sanitary Inspection of the Area.

The following are the numbers of visits and inspections carried out during 1954:

Water Supply	14
Drainage	80
Fried Fish Shops	13
Vans and Sheds	27
Factories	18
Bakehouses	7
Sanitary Accommodation	41
Refuse Dumps	16
Rats and Mice (including premises visited by Rodent Operator)	103
Refuse Accumulation	2
Miscellaneous Sanitary Visits	31
Nightsoil Disposal	7
Sewers and Sewage Disposal Works	90
Dykes	26
Building Byelaws	277
Drain and Sewer Tests	32
Piggeries	4
Petroleum Installations	5

Inspection of Dwelling Houses.

(1) Number of houses inspected under Public Health Acts and Housing Consolidated Regulations (excluding Council Houses)	39
(2) Number of Inspections for the above purpose	54
(3) Number of houses which on inspection were considered to be unfit for human habitation	9
(4) Number of houses not fit in all respects for human habitation	12
(5) Number of houses the defects in which were remedied in consequences of informal action by the Local Authority or their Officers	8
(6) Number of representations made to the Local Authority with a view to the serving of notices requiring the execution of works or the making of demolition or closing orders	8
(7) Number of informal notices served requiring the execution of works	8
(8) Number of houses which were rendered fit after service of formal notices	Nil
(9) Number of demolition orders made	1
(10) Number of houses in respect of which an undertaking was accepted under Section 11 of the Housing Act, 1936	2
(11) Number of houses demolished	5
(12) Number of inspections and visits to houses in connection with Improvement Grants	70
(13) Number of visits to Council Houses — Repairs and Complaints, etc.	606
(14) Miscellaneous Housing Visits	6

Meat and Food Inspection.

Butchers' Shops and Slaughterhouses	57
Grocers' Shops	17
Ice Cream Premises (Retail)	7
Interviews and Meetings attended	1,312

Notices Served.

No. of Written Informal Notices served	19
No. of above complied with	14
No. of above where work in hand at close of year	4
No. of Verbal Notices given	29
No. of Verbal Notices complied with	27
Demolition Orders served	1
Demolition Orders carried out (including those made pre 1954)	1
Statutory Notices (Public Health Act) served and complied with	3

Housing.

Good progress was made during the year in the erection of new Council houses, particularly on the two largest Estates at Doddington and Wimblington. Thirty 3 bedroom type houses were handed over for occupation, bringing the total of post war Council houses up to 110, plus 10 Old Peoples' Dwellings, and 15 Aluminium pre-fabricated bungalows. At the end of the year there were 32 Council houses under construction.

Private enterprise made the contribution of nine new dwellings completed in 1954, with a further nine under construction at the end of the year. In addition, one bungalow was erected in the District by the Huntingdonshire County Council Small Holding Department.

The increased rate of Council house building has facilitated the re-housing of several families from sub-standard houses, in respect of which action has been taken under the Housing Act, 1936, to secure demolition or reconditioning. There are still many sub-standard houses left in the District, many of which have reached the worn-out stage, and in some cases the occupiers have not yet made application for alternative housing accommodation. These houses will have to be dealt with under the Five Year Plan to be submitted in accordance with the Housing Repairs and Rents Act, 1954.

One Demolition Order was made during the year and two undertakings not to re-let were accepted in respect of two further cottages. One dwelling was demolished from an outstanding Demolition Order, whilst four other dwellings were demolished voluntarily, of which only one was occupied, the tenant being re-housed by the Council. Eight written informal notices were served for repairs to houses, of which five had been completed by the end of the year. Two Statutory Notices under S.83 of the Public Health Act, 1936, were served and complied with.

As in previous years, owing to the heavy demands on time in attending to numerous other duties, including the repair and maintenance of Council houses, it was not possible to devote much time to the inspection of privately owned rented houses. 606 calls were made at Council houses in 1954.

Improvement Grants.

Early in the year the Council resolved to adopt the principle of making Improvement Grants under the Housing Act, 1949, each application to be considered on its own merits.

Twenty three applications were received during the year, of which 21 had been considered and approved by 31st December, the total value of the Grants amounting to £5,881 0s. 8d. Work on 11 of these schemes commenced during the year, five of them being completed by 31st December.

No applications were received for grants under Section 3 of the Housing (Financial Provisions) Act, 1938.

Civil Building Control and Building Byelaws.

1954 saw a further relaxation of licensing control with a final removal of all restrictions on 10th November. In April the Ministry of Works took over responsibility for the issue of licences for new houses under 1,500 sq. ft. in area. Six licences were issued for new houses. No licences were issued for repairs to dwelling houses, the ceiling figure having been increased to £1,000 on January 1st, 1954.

81 plans were deposited with the Council under their Building Byelaws, all of which were approved. 11 notices were served under S.66 of the Public Health Act, 1936 in respect of plans for dwellings which had not been commenced within three years of deposit. 277 inspections were made of premises in connection with the Building Byelaws. New Building Byelaws based on the Model issued by the Ministry of Housing and Local Government were made by the Council during the preceding year, coming into operation on 7th November, 1953.

Water Supply.

The following is the information requested by the Ministry of Health:

(i) In those parts of the parishes of Doddington and Wimblington served by the Wisbech and District Water Board, the water supply has been adequate in quantity and there have been no complaints as to quality.

So far as the parish of Manea is concerned, there is little change from the previous year and daytime pressure will remain unsatisfactory until the new trunk main in course of construction is completed. This new main will afford a supply to the village of Stonea, which at present relies on rain water and river water for drinking and domestic purposes, augmented by mains water carted when necessary. Welches Dam relies on similar arrangements.

The laying of the water main to Benwick and distribution mains in the village were completed during the early part of the year and the supply came into general use in March/April. By the end of the year 158 connections to the main had been made in the village. Due to a poor batch of pipes, part of the system at first delivered a water which, whilst bacteriologically safe, carried an unpleasant taste. Chemical treatment by the Water Board removed the taste-forming substances, and thereafter the water was pure and wholesome. Bacteriological examinations were made of every new length of main put into service by the Water Board's Chemist and Bacteriologist. Due to a period of drought in January/February before the mains supply was completed, it was necessary to resort to water carting in the village of Benwick, 11,000 gallons being distributed.

(ii) Independent sampling of piped water supplies is not carried out, as the Water Board's Chemist carries out frequent bacteriological examinations of the mains water at selected sampling points. Five samples were, however, taken independently upon request at Doddington Hospital to check upon the purity of the storage tanks. Contamination was found to be occurring therein and was dealt with in conjunction with the Water Board's Chemist. Routine check samples are now taken at the Hospital.

(iii) No action by the Council was necessary in respect of contamination with the exception of Doddington Hospital. The Regional Hospital Board have been advised to provide drinking points direct from the main.

(iv) The local supply of water is not plumbo-solvent.

(v) Proportion of dwelling houses supplied from public mains:

Parish	Direct to Houses	By standpipe
Wimblington	85%	2½%
Doddington	75%	2%
Manea	81%	9%
Welches Dam	Nil	Nil
Benwick	58%	21%

For the following Schedule of Works carried out in North Witchford Rural District during 1954, I am indebted to Mr. J. K. Dawson, A.M.I.C.E., A.M.I.W.E., Water Engineer to the Wisbech and District Water Board.

New Mains Laid.

Benwick Scheme	796 yards	4" main
	4,589 "	3" "
	79 "	2" "
Wimblington Housing Site	151 yards	3" main
	14 "	2" "
Doddington Housing Site	186 yards	3" main
	90 "	2" "
Dykemoor Farm, West Doddington	1,334 yards	2" main

Number of Premises Connected.

Benwick	158
Doddington	53
Manea	4
Wimblington	25
Total	240

During the year the Council considered 7 draft Water Extension Schemes prepared by the Wisbech and District Water Board in conjunction with the Isle of Ely Agricultural Executive Committee, which the Council approved in principle on the basis that when the finalised schemes were submitted for Ministry approval they would rank for grant.

Drainage and Sewerage.

Certain portions of the oldest built up areas of Doddington, Wimblington and Manea are served by old combined storm water and foul sewers, all of which discharge into obsolete works or open dykes. It is not surprising therefore that considerable pollution by sewage matter occurs in such dykes, and in turn in the drains forming part of the extensive land drainage system in the area, resulting in complaints from land users and Drainage Boards. With the advent of piped water supply in the village of Benwick, the need for a proper drainage system becomes apparent, since many occupiers wish to add modern amenities to their property long denied them owing to the absence of an adequate water supply. After deliberation the Council decided to call in their Consulting Engineers to go into the sewerage schemes prepared in 1945, for the whole of the Area, with a view to finding out the estimated present day cost with or without modifications and also the possibility of Government grants. At the end of the year the report of the Engineers was not completed.

The post war housing estates at Wimblington and Manea have been equipped with modern sewage disposal plants, whilst Doddington estate has a septic tank outfall connected with the filter beds to the old sewage disposal works for the village. The Benwick post war houses have individual cesspools pending the provision of main drainage for the village.

Apart from the usual maintenance work of cleansing sewage outfall dykes and emptying settlement tanks and catchpits at outfall works, no extensive repair or reconstruction of sewers and disposal works was undertaken during the year.

Drainage disposal to such other houses as are provided with drainage systems is, in the main, by use of septic tanks, cesspools and soakwells, which function with varying degrees of success. A large number of houses, particularly in Manea and Benwick, are provided with pail closets, and many other properties have vault closets.

Public Cleansing.

Night soil is still collected by contractors, composted with straw and utilised on arable land. The contracts provide for 3 collections of closet pails per fortnight and some 660 closets are dealt with. This collection used to be done during the hours of darkness, but in recent years with the shortage of labour it has been the practice in most portions of the area (in common with other districts) to make collections in the day time and it has become an unpleasant necessity to have vehicles collecting pail contents standing and operating in the streets in broad daylight.

During the year only a few pail closets were converted to the water carriage system, and very little progress in this direction can be made until proper water borne sewerage systems draining to up to date sewage works are available. Difficulty is being experienced in finding satisfactory sites for disposal of nightsoil.

Cesspools and vaults are emptied upon request by occupiers by one of the Contractors, who uses a cesspool emptier for this purpose. The contents are either discharged on to arable land or disposed at the night soil tipping points.

Tins and indestructible household refuse are collected at monthly intervals by contract, employing the kerbside method. Disposal is effected in disused gravel pits, where the refuse is periodically covered with soil specially carted to the site. Unfortunately these sites are open to all-comers and a certain amount of indiscriminate tipping occurs which makes it difficult and expensive to cover the entire tipping face with soil. The refuse contractors carried out their duties very satisfactorily during the year under review.

Public Convenience, Doddington.

The new Public Convenience at Doddington was completed during the year and will fulfil a much needed want, particularly on the part of the visitors to the County Hospital, Doddington.

Milk Supply.

The bulk of the milk supply is now distributed by two firms operating from dairies situated outside the District. Such milk is either Tuberculin Tested or Pasteurised.

The following licences were issued during the year under the Milk (Special Designations) Regulations, 1949:

Supplementary Licences:	Pasteurised	2
	Tuberculin Tested	2
	Tuberculin Tested Milk	
	(Pasteurised)	1
	Sterilised	1

The following samples of milk were taken during the course of delivery by roundsmen for examination at the Public Health Laboratory, Cambridge, and all were satisfactory:

Pasteurised	2
Sterilised	1
Tuberculin Tested (Farm Bottled)	1
Tuberculin Tested (Pasteurised)	1
Ungraded	1

Meat and Other Food Inspection.

Up to the time of derationing of meat in July, 1954, none of the slaughter houses in the District had been licensed under Section 57 of the Food & Drugs Act, 1938. Home killed meat supplied to the area during the period of control had been slaughtered in the adjoining Urban District of March, where it was inspected at the time of slaughter. With the advent of derationing of meat, a review of slaughter houses in the District took place, as a result of which it was agreed to license such premises after applicants had carried out repairs and reasonable improvements. Only three slaughter houses have been licensed under S.27, all expiring on 16th August, 1957; and one of these is in respect of new premises. The six butchers in the area have most of their animals slaughtered in the neighbouring Urban District and the need for further licensing does not arise. No premises have been licensed for Deadweight Certification of Pigs.

During the year the following food animals have been slaughtered at premises in the District and inspected for fitness for human consumption.

Rejected.

7 beasts (2 casualties)	1 set lungs, 2 livers, 1 set kidneys. Congestion.
	1 head. Tuberculosis.
47 pigs (26 casualties)	1 carcase and organs. Fevered.
	9 plucks. Necrosis.
	2 heads. Tuberculosis.

55 sheep.

In addition the following home killed meat was inspected at Butchers' shops and condemned for reasons stated:

Pork 19lbs.	Contusion.
Beef 97lbs.	Bone Taint.

Other foodstuffs inspected in Grocers' shops and voluntarily surrendered (being unfit for human consumption) include:

- 14 tins Evaporated milk.
- 2 tins Pears.
- 1 tin Pineapple.
- 1 tin Peaches.

Ice Cream.

No Ice Cream is manufactured in the area. One additional shop was registered under Section 14 of the Food and Drugs Act, 1938, for the sale and storage of ice cream, the total number of premises now in use for sale of ice cream being 14. Four samples of ice cream were taken and submitted for examination at the Public Health Laboratory, these being placed in the undermentioned categories:

- Grade 1. — 3 samples.
- Grade 2. — 1 sample.

Food Premises.

- (1) The number of food premises in the area is as follows:
 - Grocer and general provision stores 20
 - Confectioners only 2
 - Butchers 6
 - Bakers 5
 - Fried Fish Shops 6
 - Cafés 2
- (2) 14 premises are registered under Section 14 of the Food and Drugs Act for the sale of Ice Cream. There are no dairies in the District.
- (3) Seven inspections were made during the year of premises registered for the sale of Ice Cream.
- (4) No special activity has been undertaken during the year regarding clean food campaigns. Byelaws for handling food have been adopted under Section 15 of the Food & Drugs Act, 1938.
- (5) The small quantities of condemned tinstuffs have been disposed of by burial at the refuse dumps, whilst the meat has been returned to the Ministry of Food Depot with an official condemnation certificate. Since derationing, rejected meat is either removed for disposal by burial or buried on the premises under supervision.

Moveable Dwellings.

There are no large caravan sites in the area. Nine licences were issued under Section 269 of the Public Health Act, 1936, authorising the use of caravans for a limited period on individual sites. Periodical inspections are made to ensure observance of sanitary requirements.

Rodent Control.

Comparatively few complaints have been received regarding infestation generally, and these have all been dealt with. The various sewage dykes and refuse tips are treated regularly by the Council's employee. The Pest Department of the Isle of Ely County Agricultural Executive Committee carry out a considerable amount of rat destruction in the area, having contracts for the treatment of over 100 premises.

Factories Acts, 1937 and 1948.

- 1. Inspections.
 - (i) Factories in which Sections 1, 2, 3, 4 and 6 are enforced by Local Authority.
 - (ii) Factories not included in (i) in which Section 7 is enforced by the Local Authority.
- Total

Number on Register.	Number of	
	Inspections	Written Notices.
6	8	—
20	17	1
26	25	1

Cases in which defects were found.

- Want of cleanliness
- Sanitary Conveniences unsuitable or defective
- Total

Found.	Remedied.
4	4
3	2
7	6

There are no outworkers employed.

28th July, 1955.

J. METCALFE,
Sanitary Inspector.

